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PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SEATTLE WA
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...2015 WESTERN WASHINGTON WEATHER YEAR IN REVIEW...

2015 WEATHER WILL BE REMEMBERED AS A WARM DRY YEAR WITH A POOR MOUNTAIN SNOWPACK THAT TURNED WET AND OCCASIONALLY WINDY IN THE CLOSING TWO MONTHS WITH A REBOUND OF MOUNTAIN SNOW. AS OF DECEMBER 22ND...THE AMOUNT OF SNOW IN THE CASCADES AND OLYMPICS EXCEEDED THE GREATEST AMOUNT ON THE GROUND AT ANY TIME IN THE WINTER OF 2014/2015.

THERE WERE TEN WEATHER-RELATED FATALITIES AND FIVE INJURIES - MOST THE RESULT OF STRONG WINDS. WEATHER-RELATED DAMAGE TOTALS THROUGH OCTOBER WERE IN EXCESS OF 5 MILLION DOLLARS WITH DAMAGE AMOUNTS FROM THE FLOOD AND WIND EVENTS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER STILL TO COME. THE BULK OF THE FIVE MILLION DOLLAR DAMAGES WERE FROM THE AUGUST 29TH WIND STORM.

FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW IT WAS A RECORD WARM YEAR. WITH ABOUT A WEEK LEFT BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR...THE AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT SEATAC AIRPORT WAS 55.8 DEGREES...EXCEEDING THE PREVIOUS RECORD OF 55.0 DEGREES SET JUST LAST YEAR.

THE AVERAGE HIGH TEMPERATURE WAS 63.5 DEGREES EXCEEDING THE RECORD OF 62.5 DEGREES SET IN 2014 AND 1992. THE AVERAGE LOW TEMPERATURE WAS 48.0 DEGREES EXCEEDING THE RECORD WARM LOW TEMPERATURE AVERAGE OF 47.5 DEGREES SET JUST LAST YEAR.

THERE WERE FOUR MONTHS THAT SET RECORDS FOR THE WARMEST MONTH...

FEBRUARY 48.8 DEGREES...OLD RECORD 48.7 IN 1977
MARCH 50.5 DEGREES...OLD RECORD 50.3 IN 1992
JUNE 67.7 DEGREES...OLD RECORD 64.9 DEGREES IN 1992
JULY 71.2 DEGREES...OLD RECORD 69.5 IN 2009

THERE WERE FOUR OTHER MONTHS THAT ENDED UP IN THE TOP 5 WARMEST.

JANUARY 45.1 DEGREES (5TH)
MAY 59.1 DEGREES (5TH)
AUGUST 68.7 DEGREES (4TH)
OCTOBER 57.2 DEGREES (2ND)

AN 18 MONTH STREAK OF ABOVE NORMAL TEMPERATURES ENDED IN SEPTEMBER WHEN THE AVERAGE TEMPERATURE WAS 60.5 DEGREES...0.8 DEGREES BELOW NORMAL.

WITH THE WARM SUMMER...RECORDS AT SEATAC WERE SET FOR THE MOST NUMBER OF DAYS OF:

90 DEGRES PLUS...12...OLD RECORD 9 FROM 1958
85 DEGREES PLUS ...26...OLD RECORD 22 FROM 2014
80 DEGREES PLUS 51 DAYS...OLD RECORD 47 DAYS FROM 1958
70 DEGREES PLUS 116 DAYS...OLD RECORD 115 FROM 1992

RECORDS WERE ALSO SET FOR THE NUMBER OF – WARM - LOW TEMPERATURES WITH 35 DAYS OF A LOW TEMPERATURE OF 60 DEGREES OR MORE...BREAKING THE OLD RECORD OF 34 DAYS SET IN 2013. ASSOCIATED WITH THE WARM LOW TEMPERATURES...2015 HAD A RECORD TOTAL OF COOLING DEGREE DAYS WITH 470...BREAKING THE FORMER RECORD OF 385 IN 2013.

THE YEAR WAS DRY...UNTIL THE FINAL FEW MONTHS. THROUGH DECEMBER 22ND...THIS MONTH AT SEATAC AIRPORT HAD A TOTAL OF 10.24 INCHES MAKING IT CURRENTLY THE SECOND WETTEST DECEMBER ON RECORD. THE WETTEST DECEMBER WAS SET IN 1979 WITH 11.85 INCHES. IN ADDITION...THIS DECEMBER IS ALSO CURRENTLY THE 8TH WETTEST OF ANY MONTH ON RECORD. THE WETTEST MONTH WAS SET IN NOVEMBER 2006 WITH 15.63 INCHES.

DESPITE THE DRY EARLY AND MIDDLE OF THE YEAR...2015 WILL FINISH WITH ABOVE NORMAL PRECIPITATION. THROUGH DECEMBER 22ND...THE PRECIPITATION TOTAL FOR THE YEAR WAS 43.86. THE ANNUAL NORMAL IS 37.49 INCHES.

IN ADDITION...A RECORD WAS SET FOR THE NUMBER OF DAYS WITH ONE INCH OR MORE PRECIPITATION WITH 14 DAYS DURING THE YEAR. THE OLD RECORD WAS NINE SET IN BOTH 1996 AND 2006.

THE YEAR BEGAN WITH A WEAK EN NINO IN PLACE. THEN IN APRIL...THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN TROPICAL WATERS BEGAN A STEADY WARMING TREND...RESULTING IN WHAT MAY BE THE THIRD WARMEST EL NINO GOING BACK TO 1950.

AS TYPICAL WITH EL NINO WINTER SEASONS...THE STORM TRACK WAS AIMED PRIMARILY AT THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST DURING THE FALL RESULTING IN A LOT OF ACTIVE WEATHER. THIS FALLS WEATHER INCLUDED SEVERAL ATMOSPHERIC RIVER – AKA – PINEAPPLE EXPRESS – EVENTS DURING HALLOWEEN WEEKEND...MID NOVEMBER AND AGAIN IN EARLY DECEMBER. FLOODING WAS WIDESPREAD ALONG WITH SOME LANDSLIDES SUCH AS WHAT

CLOSED US-12 NEAR WHITE PASS AND I-5 NEAR WOODLAND. A WIND STORM ALSO SWEEPED THROUGH THE STATE ON NOVEMBER 17TH.

THERE WERE TWO TORNADOES IN THE STATE THIS YEAR. WASHINGTON AVERAGES BETWEEN ONE AND TWO TORNADOES PER YEAR. AN EF1 TORNADO MOVED THROUGH THE GIG HARBOR AREA ON JANUARY 18TH WHILE ANOTHER EF1 TORNADO TOUCHED DOWN IN THE BATTLE GROUND AREA ON DECEMBER 10TH. THERE WERE NO FATALITIES OR INJURIES WITH EITHER EVENT.

BELOW IS A LIST OF THE YEARS SIGNIFICANT WEATHER EVENTS AND THE RECORD TEMPERATURES AND PRECIPITATION ESTABLISHED THUS FAR THIS YEAR.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

TORNADOES AND WATERSPOUTS

JANUARY 18 – PIERCE COUNTY – AN EF1 TORNADO MOVED 4 MILES THROUGH THE GIG HARBOR AREA.

DECEMBER 10 – CLARK COUNTY - A EF1 TORNADO TOUCHED DOWN IN THE BATTLE GROUND AREA.

LIGHTNING/THUNDERSTORMS

APRIL 1 – KING COUNTY – LIGHTNING HIT A TREE OUTSIDE OF A FEDERAL WAY HOME AND RADIATED INTO THE HOME DAMAGING DRYWALL...GUTTERS AND CAUSED A GAS LINE TO RUPTURE.

HAIL

NO SEVERE SIZED HAIL – 1 INCH OR GREATER DIAMETER – WAS REPORTED DURING THE YEAR ALTHOUGH THERE WERE A NUMBER OF REPORTS OF SMALL HAIL, ICE PELLETS AND GRAUPEL OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR.

HIGH WINDS

JANUARY 18 – NORTH INTERIOR/PUGET SOUND AREA – STRONG WINDS UP TO 60 MPH KNOCKED POWER OUT TO ABOUT 50000 CUSTOMERS. A TREE FELL ON A SHORELINE HOME SIGNIFICANTLY DAMAGING THE HOME AND DISPLACING THE OCCUPANTS UNTIL REPAIRS COULD BE MADE.

APRIL 11 – STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA – STRONG WEST WINDS OF UP TO 30 KNOTS PRODUCED WIND WAVES OF UP TO 4 FEET. TWO PEOPLE DIED AND ONE WAS INJURED WHILE KAYAKING NEAR NEW DUNGENESS.

AUGUST 29 – MUCH OF WESTERN WASHINGTON – A LATE SUMMER WIND STORM WITH WIND GUSTS UP TO 67 MPH PRODUCED WIDESPREAD TREE DAMAGE AND ABOUT 450000 CUSTOMERS WITHOUT POWER. A TREE FELL ON A VEHICLE KILLING THE MOTORIST. A 10-YEAR OLD GIRL WAS KILLED IN SEATAC BY A FALLING TREE BRANCH. TWO ELDERLY PEOPLE DIED IN THEIR WHATCOM COUNTY HOME AFTER BEING OVERCOME BY GENERATOR EXHAUST FUMES. THE STORM PRODUCED OVER 3.5 MILLION DOLLARS IN DAMAGE.

SEPTEMBER 20 – BELLEVUE AREA – STRONG WINDS UP TO 38 MPH AND CHOPPY LAKE WASHINGTON WATERS OVERTURNED A 21-FOOT CATAMARAN DUMPING THE THREE SAILORS INTO THE WATER. HARBOR PATROL PULLED TWO OUT OF THE WATER BUT ONE WAS TRAPPED UNDER THE CATAMARAN AND DROWNED.

NOVEMBER 17 – MUCH OF WESTERN WASHINGTON – STRONG WINDS UP TO 62 MPH IN THE LOWLANDS AND WELL OVER 100 MPH IN THE MOUNTAINS RESULTED IN WIDESPREAD DOWNED TREES AND OVER 300000 POWER OUTAGES. A MOTORIST NEAR MONROE WAS KILLED BY A FALLEN TREE. DAMAGES FROM THIS EVENT WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

WINTER STORMS/WIND CHILL

JUNE 11 – MT RAINIER – A CLIMBER NEAR THE SUMMIT PERISHED DUE TO STRONG WINDS...COLD AND WIND CHILL.

DECEMBER 19 – SNOQUALMIE PASS AREA – A BACKCOUNTRY SKIER DID NOT RETURN FROM A DAY TRIP. SEARCH EFFORTS HAVE NOT FOUND HIM AS YET AND HE REMAINS MISSING.

DECEMBER 19 – SNOQUALMIE PASS – A SKIER FELL INTO A TREE WELL AND DIED WHEN HE BECAME BURIED IN SNOW.

AVALANCHE

THE POOR WINTER OF 2014/15 MOUNTAIN SNOWPACK RESULTED IN NO FATALITIES OR INJURIES. THE START OF 2015/2016 WINTER HAS PRODUCED FAR MORE SNOW THAN THE PREVIOUS WINTER. NO SIGNIFICANT AVALANCHES HAD OCCURRED THUS FAR.

FLOODS/HEAVY RAIN/LANDSLIDES

JANUARY 5 – MUCH OF WESTERN WASHINGTON – HEAVY RAIN AMOUNTS PRODUCED LANDSLIDES IN PARTS OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON AS WELL AS THE SEATTLE AREA AND IN SNOHOMISH COUNTY. A FEW HOQUIAM WERE HIT BY SLIDES. WSDOT REPORTED HIGHWAYS 101...12...107...109...105 AND 4 WERE CLOSED FOR A WHILE DUE TO SLIDES AND WATER OVER THE ROADWAY. ESTIMATED DAMAGES WERE 300000 DOLLARS.

FEBRUARY 6 – HOOD CANAL AREA - HEAVY RAINFALL IN THE BRINNON AREA RESULTED IN SLIDES THAT DAMAGED SIX HOMES. DUCKABUSH RIVER FLOOD WATERS ALSO INUNDATED SOME HOMES IN THE AREA. ESTIMATED DAMAGES WERE NEAR 200000 DOLLARS.

MARCH 15 – SEQUIM AREA – LOCAL HEAVY RAINFALL RESULTED IN SEVERAL HOMES AND APARTMENTS WITH WATER IN THE DWELLINGS. ESTIMATED DAMAGES WERE ABOUT 30000 DOLLARS.

SEPTEMBER 3 – SAN JUAN ISLAND – LOCAL HEAVY RAINFALL RESULTED IN ACCUMULATING WATER IN LOWER DOWNTOWN FRIDAY HARBOR...FLOODING SEVERAL BUSINESSES FOR A FEW HOURS. ESTIMATED DAMAGES WERE ABOUT 10000 DOLLARS.

OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 4 – MUCH OF WESTERN WASHINGTON – HEAVY RAINFALL PRODUCED FLOODING ON TEN RIVERS WITH TWO EXCEEDING THE MAJOR FLOOD CATEGORY. A NUMBER OF ROADWAYS WERE CLOSED DUE TO HIGH WATER. DAMAGE ESTIMATES WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

NOVEMBER 12-21 – MUCH OF WESTERN WASHINGTON – HEAVY RAINFALL OF UP TO 20 INCHES IN THE MOUNTAINS AND UP TO 15 INCHES IN SOME LOWLAND AREAS FELL DURING THE 12TH THROUGH THE 18TH. THE RUNOFF RESULTED IN 22 RIVERS EXCEEDING FLOOD STAGE WITH TEN RIVERS REACHING MAJOR FLOOD CATEGORY. THE ONGOING RAINFALL RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF RIVERS HAVING TWO FLOOD PEAKS. A NUMBER OF ROADWAYS WERE INUNDATED ALONG WITH MANY HOMES. A FEW LANDSLIDES OCCURRED INCLUDING NEAR NEHALAM ON SR-20 AND SCOURING OF A US 2 BRIDGE NEAR SKYKOMISH. TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATES WERE NOT AVAILABLE YET.

DECEMBER 1-14 – MUCH OF WESTERN WASHINGTON – HEAVY RAINFALL ONCE AGAIN DROVE 22 RIVERS ABOVE FLOOD STAGE WITH EIGHT EXCEEDING MAJOR FLOOD CATEGORY. THE SKOKOMISH RIVER WAS OVER FLOOD STAGE FOR 10 DAYS – THAT MAY BE LONGEST TIME PERIOD ON RECORD. THE SOAKED SOILS ALSO RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF LANDSLIDES SUCH AS ONE THAT DAMAGED SEVERAL BURIEN HOMES AND CLOSED THE RAIL-LINE BETWEEN EDMONDS AND EVERETT. DAMAGE ESTIMATES WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

MARINE INCIDENTS INCLUDING COASTAL FLOODING/HIGH SURF AND RIP CURRENTS

DECEMBER 10 – GRAYS HARBOR AREA – THE COMBINATION OF HIGH CHEHALIS RIVER RUNOFF AND SEASONAL HIGH TIDES RESULTED IN COASTAL FLOODING. LOW LYING STREETS AND BUSINESSES IN THE ABERDEEN AND HOQUIAM AREAS HAD WATER RISE INTO THEM. THE COUNTYS JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER HAD TO BE EVACUATED DURING THE HIGH WATER. DAMAGE ESTIMATES WERE NOT

YET AVAILABLE.

HEAT/WILDFIRE

JULY 1-5 – INTERIOR OF WESTERN WASHINGTON – MANY PARTS OF THE INTERIOR ENDURED FIVE DAYS OF HIGH TEMPERATURES OF 90 OR BETTER WITH SOME MORNING LOWS ONLY DROPPING INTO THE LOWER TO MID 60S. OLYMPIA PEAKED AT 96 DEGREES ON THE 2ND WHILE SEATAC AIRPORT HIT 93 ON THE SAME DAY.

JULY 31 – MASON COUNTY – THE DECKERVILLE WILDFIRE BURNED EIGHT HOMES IN RURAL WESTERN MASON COUNTY. ESTIMATED DAMAGES WERE NEAR 800000 DOLLARS.

HERE ARE THE HIGH...LOW AND PRECIPITATION RECORDS THAT WERE BROKEN DURING 2015. ENTRIES HAVE THE MONTH/DATE OF THE RECORD...WITH THE RECORD VALUE FOLLOWING. T – MEANS THAT IT WAS TIED.

.....NEEDS TO BE UPDATED BELOW.

THERE WERE FAR MORE RECORD DAILY HIGH TEMPERATURES THAN LOWS REFLECTING THE RECORD WARM YEAR. IN ADDITION...DAILY RAINFALL RECORDS ALSO FAR OUTNUMBERED THE LOW TEMPERATURE RECORDS SET.

SEA-TAC AIRPORT...RECORDS DATE BACK TO 1945

HIGH TEMP	LOW TEMP	PRECIPITATION
05/01 85	NONE	03/08 1.27
07/01 94		03/16 1.09
08/11 96		03/28 0.87
09/06 90		04/17 0.73
10/06 78(T)		05/03 1.31
10/19 72		05/08 0.54
11/27 58(T)		07/23 0.76
12/05 55(T)		08/13 0.85
12/07 58		09/23 0.72
12/09 61		10/22 1.26
12/10 66		
12/11 58		

OLYMPIA AIRPORT...RECORDS DATE BACK TO 1948

HIGH TEMP	LOW TEMP	PRECIPITATION
05/01 88	03/22 24(T)	02/17 1.23
07/01 94	11/16 16	03/08 1.77
09/06 89	11/17 18(T)	05/08 0.52
10/19 73	11/18 19	07/23 0.27
11/26 59(T)	12/02 19	08/13 0.57
11/27 58		10/13 0.56
12/09 59(T)		10/22 1.43
12/10 64		
12/11 58(T)		

QUILLAYUTE AIRPORT...RECORDS DATE BACK TO 1966

HIGH TEMP	LOW TEMP	PRECIPITATION
01/16 60	11/15 21	01/10 2.74
01/17 64	11/17 24	03/05 1.65
01/24 66	11/29 20	03/08 2.70
01/25 60	11/30 19	04/17 1.71
01/26 61	12/01 19	05/03 1.10
03/24 67	12/02 25	05/08 0.92(T)
04/30 84		06/19 0.79
05/01 83		10/13 1.92
05/14 83		10/22 2.44
07/01 91(T)		11/03 4.20
09/05 87		12/08 2.30
09/06 89		12/10 3.36
10/03 77(T)		
12/05 57		
12/07 59		
12/09 57		
12/10 58		
12/11 55		

HOQUIAM AIPORT...RECORDS DATE BACK TO 1953

HIGH TEMP	LOW TEMP	PRECIPITATION
01/24 58	02/07 21	02/16 1.82
03/24 67(T)		03/02 1.35
04/30 84		04/17 0.77
05/01 80		04/23 1.63

05/14	84	05/03	1.21
07/01	89(T)	05/08	1.16
09/06	87	07/23	0.63
11/26	56	09/23	1.30
11/27	57(T)	10/13	1.18
12/07	56	12/20	1.88
12/08	56		
12/09	59		
12/10	60		
12/21	55(T)		

BELLINGHAM AIRPORT...RECORDS DATE BACK TO 1949

HIGH TEMP	LOW TEMP	PRECIPITATION
04/07 68(T)	02/06 20(T)	03/02 0.62
05/01 78	02/07 20(T)	03/19 0.53
05/15 80	11/30 18(T)	04/24 1.15
07/01 84	12/01 19(T)	05/04 0.86
07/13 86		07/23 0.72
08/26 84		07/24 0.31
10/19 75		08/13 0.51
11/06 63(T)		09/02 0.53
12/08 62		12/10 0.93
12/09 63		
12/10 67		
12/11 59		
12/18 56(T)		

SEATTLE WFO AT SANDPOINT...RECORDS DATE BACK TO 1986

HIGH TEMP	LOW TEMP	PRECIPITATION
03/05 61(T)	02/04 27	02/10 0.48
04/29 76(T)	02/05 21	02/11 0.68
05/01 86	02/06 20	02/15 0.74
05/02 69(T)	02/07 23	02/16 1.04
05/13 77	06/21 50(T)	03/05 1.43
05/14 80(T)	11/12 28	03/08 1.13
07/01 88	11/13 30	03/16 1.13
07/06 85	11/14 29	04/17 1.04
07/12 88	11/15 29	05/03 0.95
07/13 87	11/17 28(T)	05/04 0.49
07/15 85	11/18 30(T)	05/08 0.40

07/16	89	11/30	23	07/23	0.89
08/11	95	12/01	26	08/12	0.32
08/18	85	12/02	28	08/13	0.48
08/25	86			08/30	0.26
08/26	89			09/02	0.58
09/06	87			09/23	0.65
09/15	87			09/24	0.76
09/21	83			10/22	1.39
10/04	73			10/31	1.18
10/06	78(T)				
10/13	69(T)				
10/19	73				
11/06	62				
11/25	57				
11/26	59				
11/27	59				
12/06	54(T)				
12/08	58				
12/09	61				
12/10	65				
12/11	57				
12/15	56				
12/21	55				

GRUB/FELTON/MCFARLAND/NEHER/BOWER/BURKE/MCDONNAL/BUEHNER